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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Office of  
Governmental  
and Public Affairs

# Major News Releases and Speeches

May 28 - June 4, 1982

## IN THIS ISSUE:

### News Releases—

Preliminary Summary of Food Assistance Program Results for March 1982

Final Rules Strengthen WIC Food Delivery System

Block Comments on Japanese Trade Measures

USDA Adopts Final Procedures to Modernize Poultry Inspection

USDA Releases Cost of Food at Home for April

Easier Approval for Additives to Meat and Poultry Proposed

Smokey and Bambi Join in Forest Fire Prevention Effort

USDA Announces New Financial Rules for Federally Licensed Warehouses

New York Approved to Receive Stallions from Cem-Affected Countries

Research Update; USDA Gives Story Leads

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# News Releases

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## PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RESULTS FOR MARCH 1982

WASHINGTON, May 28—Listed below are preliminary estimates of participation in the federal-state food assistance programs for March including comparisons with the previous month and with the same month of last year. The estimates were released today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service.

	March 1981	February 1982	March 1982
<b>THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM:</b>			
People participating this month (millions)	23.0	22.3	22.7
Value of bonus coupons (millions)	\$963.8	\$883.2	\$896.5
Average bonus per person	\$41.95	\$39.56	\$39.54
<b>FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM ON INDIAN RESERVATIONS:</b>			
Number of projects in operation	75	78	79
People participating this month (thousands)	74.2	78.9	79.9
<b>THE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM (WIC):</b>			
People participating this month (millions)	2.185	2.121	2.166
Federal food costs (millions) <sup>a</sup>	\$60.7	\$62.0	\$63.7
<b>THE COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM:</b>			
Number of projects in operation	21	26	25
People participating this month (thousands)	121.6	120.0	125.4

	March 1981	February 1982	March 1982
<b>THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM:</b>			
Number of schools taking part <sup>b</sup>	93,998	91,155	91,155
Children participating this month (millions)	26.1	23.2	23.3
Children reached with free or reduced-priced lunches this month (millions)	12.9	11.6	11.7
Percentage of lunches served free	41.6	42.9	42.8
Percentage of lunches served at reduced price	7.7	7.3	7.4
<b>THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM:</b>			
Number of schools taking part <sup>b</sup>	35,099	34,363	34,363
Children participating this month (millions)	4.0	3.4	3.4
Percentage of breakfasts served free or at reduced price	86.7	89.2	89.1
<b>THE CHILD CARE FOOD PROGRAM:</b>			
Number of outlets taking part	60,400	68,800	70,100
Children participating this month (thousands):	868.8	864.0	884.0

<sup>a</sup>Due to monthly fluctuations, the federal administrative expenditures are excluded from this program.

<sup>b</sup>These data were collected semi-annually last year (October and March), but are now collected annually (October).

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## **FINAL RULES STRENGTHEN WIC FOOD DELIVERY SYSTEM**

WASHINGTON, May 28—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued final regulations to strengthen the food delivery system in the special supplemental food program for women, infants and children (WIC), according to Mary C. Jarratt, assistant secretary for food and consumer services.

"The new rules establish strong sanction authority for state use against vendors who abuse the regulations, require periodic reviews of vendor qualifications, and strengthen vendor monitoring and training requirements, Jarratt said. "The rules also allow states to limit the number of authorized vendors, require more detailed vendor agreements, and allow states to retain and use for administrative purposes up to half of the funds recovered from vendor claims.

"The regulation is one component of a multi-phase effort by the Food and Nutrition Service to improve WIC food delivery systems. This effort includes comprehensive management initiatives and improved technical assistance to states, such as aid in developing computer systems. By presenting vendor abuse and errors, we can ensure that as many participants as possible receive nutritional assistance," Jarratt said.

The WIC program provides supplemental foods, nutrition education and access to health services to about two million women and children up to age five. Eligibility must be determined by a health professional on the basis of low income and nutritional risk.

Most people eligible for the program receive monthly vouchers valued at about \$28, which they redeem at grocery stores. The vouchers are good for specified foods, such as milk, cheese, cereal, juice, eggs and dry beans or peanut butter.

Management evaluations and reviews conducted by USDA and state officials have shown occasional problems in the food delivery systems, such as grocers selling ineligible foods or overcharging the state for foods provided to recipients.

Proposed rules were issued on Jan. 23, 1981, for public comment. The final rules were developed by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service after consideration of 159 comment letters and extensive discussions with state, local and regional offices.

The regulation will become effective upon publication in the Federal Register on Friday, May 28.

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## **BLOCK COMMENTS ON JAPANESE TRADE MEASURES**

WASHINGTON, May 28—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block issued the following statement today following an announcement by Japan of trade measures affecting access for U.S. products to the Japanese market:

"We appreciate the effort by Japan to address some of our concerns about access to that country's market for agricultural products.

Ambassador of Japan Okawara met with me on Thursday to discuss measures that the Japanese plan to take, as of now, on agriculture. These center on (1) expansion of import quotas or setting minimum quota levels on such items as prepared and preserved pork, high-test molasses, and canned pineapples, (2) tariff reduction on 15 items, and (3) improvement of other import procedures.

"While we await further clarification by the Japanese government, we are disappointed that the agricultural component appears to address only a limited scope of our trade access concerns. However, we expect that it is a first step in an evolutionary process that will lead to further steps to liberalize trade. We look forward to this goal for those commodities still under import quota in Japan, particularly beef and citrus on which bilateral talks are scheduled to begin in October of this year.

"The Japanese announcement of agricultural measures was preceded by two days of intensive U.S.-Japan discussions on Monday and Tuesday, May 24-25, in Washington. At that time, the Japanese side presented certain measures that Japan could afford to take. The United States and Japan were not able to agree upon all issues, but we were able to clarify the circumstances under which significant improvement in our agricultural trade could occur. The Japanese said it would further consider these matters upon their return to Japan and that they would then communicate further with the U.S. government.



"We are particularly encouraged by Prime Minister Suzuki's statement today urging government and industry in Japan to be more forthcoming in their attitude toward trade liberalization.

"We look forward to further liberalization."

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## **USDA ADOPTS FINAL PROCEDURES TO MODERNIZE POULTRY INSPECTION**

WASHINGTON, May 28—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is adopting modernized inspection procedures for young broilers which will result in significant cost savings to the government.

The modified traditional inspection procedures—which have been in use on an interim basis since 1979—eliminate most of the time an inspector spends positioning poultry for inspection, thus increasing inspector productivity, said Donald L. Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

The procedure permits the use of mirrors to help the inspector see the back of a chicken without having to turn the carcass by hand.

"In making this inspection method permanent, more broilers can be inspected with fewer inspectors," Houston said. "This way, we can save money in our inspection program, without sacrificing product safety or quality. We estimate the procedure has saved about \$4 million annually."

Houston said the permanent regulations also set maximum linespeeds on production lines with three inspectors using modified traditional inspection procedures at 70 birds-per-minute.

The interim regulations were issued in April, 1979 as an emergency rule in response to a court decision ordering USDA to establish uniform inspection rates for young chickens nationwide.

On March 18, 1981, the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., ruled that USDA must ask for public comments on the emergency rules. USDA asked for comments May 12 and during a 60-day comment period received 35—all in support of the new inspection procedures.

Notice of the action is scheduled to be published in the May 28 Federal Register.

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## **NEW AND EXPANDED DAIRY SURPLUS DISTRIBUTION ANNOUNCED**

WASHINGTON, May 29—Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block announced today plans to distribute a portion of the surplus butter which the government purchased through its dairy price support program. He also announced an expansion of the government's cheese distribution.

The government currently holds 380 million pounds of butter in 130 freezer warehouses throughout the country. The butter, like the cheese, will be distributed to non-profit organizations serving needy persons.

"Up to 50 million pounds of butter will be available to the states through the remainder of the year," Block said. "The butter distribution program will be patterned after the successful cheese program and will make available nearly \$75 million of donated food to needy persons."

To date, nearly all of the 100 million pounds of surplus cheese authorized for distribution has been ordered by the states. The expansion of this project means a total of 220 million pounds are now authorized for the states.

"The expanded cheese distribution provides food valued at over \$320 million to needy persons," Block said. "The Food and Nutrition Service distribution network for commodity programs will be used to the maximum extent possible. The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service will ship the cheese in trucks or railroad car lots to the delivery points."

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## **USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR APRIL**

WASHINGTON, June 1—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today released its monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for April 1982.

USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans—thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost and liberal.

Esther Winterfeldt, administrator of the Human Nutrition Information Service, said the plans consist of foods that provide well-balanced meals and snacks for a week.

USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and prepared at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods and other nonfood items bought at the store.

"USDA costs are only guides to spending," Winterfeldt said. "Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes and how much food is prepared at home.

"Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable," she said. "The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon allotment in the food stamp program, is for families with less money for food. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan."

Details of the four food plans are described in Home and Garden Bulletin No. 94, "Family Food Budgeting. . .for Good Meals and Good Nutrition," which may be purchased for \$2 each from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

**COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK IN APRIL 1982**

	Plans			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate-cost	Liberal
Families:				
Family of 2 (20-54 years)	\$33.90	\$43.80	\$54.80	\$65.70
Family of 2 (55 years and over)	30.60	39.00	48.50	57.90
Family of 4 with preschool children	48.10	61.50	76.60	91.70
Family of 4 with elementary school children	58.10	74.40	93.10	111.50



## COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK IN APRIL 1982

—continued

	Plans			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate-cost	Liberal
Individuals in four-person families:				
Children:				
1-2 years	7.80	9.90	12.20	14.50
3-5 years	9.50	11.80	14.60	17.50
6-8 years	12.10	15.40	19.20	23.00
9-11 years	15.20	19.20	24.10	28.80
Females:				
12-19 years	14.30	18.20	22.50	26.80
20-54 years	13.80	17.80	22.10	26.40
55 and over	12.60	16.10	19.90	23.60
Males:				
12-14 years	16.10	20.30	25.40	30.40
15-19 years	17.60	22.40	28.10	33.70
20-54 years	17.00	22.00	27.70	33.30
55 and over	15.20	19.40	24.20	29.00

To estimate your family food costs

— For members eating all meals at home—or carried from home—use the amounts shown.

— For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from the amount shown for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out five days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one-fourth the cost shown.

— For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart are for individuals in four-person families. If your family has more or less than four, total the "individual" figures and make these adjustments, because larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones:

- For a one-person family, add 20 percent.
- For a two-person family, add 10 percent.
- For a three-person family, add 5 percent.
- For a family of five or six persons, subtract 5 percent.
- For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

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## **EASIER APPROVAL FOR ADDITIVES TO MEAT AND POULTRY PROPOSED**

WASHINGTON, June 1—A new proposal by the U.S. Department of Agriculture would expedite USDA approval of meat and poultry additives that have already been approved by the Food and Drug Administration or are generally recognized as safe.

This proposal would also improve procedures for allowing expanded uses of such substances, said Donald Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

"This would give USDA a more efficient way to handle food additive requests, and meat and poultry processors would be able to use new additives or apply for new uses for previously approved additives faster than the current system allows," Houston said.

Under present regulations, USDA must conduct lengthy rule-making proceedings on proposals for approving new substances, expanding use of already approved substances or changing usage levels for already approved substances.

"Obviously, on many occasions this type of proceeding is an appropriate and effective method for pursuing legitimate questions of food safety and for obtaining needed data about a substance," Houston said. "USDA has found, however, that the FDA approval proceedings, which must precede USDA approval, have frequently resolved all questions about the safety of an ingredient. In such cases, USDA doesn't need its own comprehensive review to permit an ingredient's use in meat or poultry products.

"Needless delays can result from such procedures, and ingredients may be withheld from the marketplace for months or even years after questions about their safety have been answered," Houston said.



Under the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, FDA considers all food additives unsafe until the agency finds them safe for a particular use. Substances classified as "generally-recognized-as-safe" are exempt from the approval process because past extensive use has produced no known harmful effects.

FDA has responsibility for determining whether and how additives may be used in food other than meat and poultry, while USDA determines whether and how additives may be used in meat and poultry products.

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposal should send their comments to: Regulations Office, Rm. 2637-S, USDA, Washington D.C., 20250. All comments must be received by Aug. 12.

The proposal will be published in the June 2 Federal Register.

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## **SMOKEY AND BAMBI JOIN IN FOREST FIRE PREVENTION EFFORT**

WASHINGTON, June 1—Two of America's most beloved forest dwellers are working together this summer in a special effort to remind people of the dangers of forest fires and what can be done to prevent them.

Smokey Bear, the official fire prevention spokesman of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, and Bambi, the star of one of Walt Disney's best known productions, will tour cities across the country spreading the message "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires. We Can't."

Don Hansen, the Forest Service's manager of the Smokey Bear program, said Smokey and Bambi make a natural team.

"Smokey and Bambi are undoubtedly the world's most experienced promoters of forest fire prevention," Hansen said. "Since 1945, Smokey has been reminding forest visitors to be careful with fire. His efforts have resulted in greatly reducing the number of forest fires which occur each year as well as saving billions of dollars worth of natural resources."

Hansen said periodic surveys done by a leading marketing firm show that Smokey is one of the most widely recognized symbols ever used in a publicity campaign.

"Bambi was helping prevent forest fires even before Smokey," Hansen said. "Bambi appeared on a fire prevention poster issued in 1944 which depicted characters from the Disney movie 'Bambi' and which included the message 'Please Mister, Don't Be Careless.'"

Hansen said the Disney production of Bambi has played an important role in raising public awareness of the dangers of forest fires.

"I doubt that anyone who has seen the film can forget the sequence in which the fire races through Bambi's home and the effect it has on the forest and the creatures who live there," Hansen said.

Smokey's manager said a new public service television announcement featuring Smokey and the fire sequence from the Bambi film has been produced.

The spot announcement will be distributed to television stations throughout the nation this summer by the Advertising Council, Inc., which coordinates the donation of about \$50 million worth of advertising space and broadcast time to the Smokey Bear campaign each year.

In addition to the television announcements, Hansen said, special Smokey Bear activities are planned to coincide with the re-release of the movie "Bambi" this summer. A special fire prevention poster, coloring sheet and sticker depicting Smokey, Bambi and other characters from the movie, such as Thumper and Flower, also will be widely distributed.

**NOTE TO EDITORS.** Black-and-white glossy photographs of a fire prevention poster showing Smokey, Bambi and other characters from the movie "Bambi" are available by contacting the Photography Center, Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. Telephone (202) 447-6633.

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## **CCC LOAN INTEREST RATE DECREASED TO 13.625 PERCENT**

WASHINGTON, June 2—Commodity and farm storage facility loans disbursed in June by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 13.625 percent interest rate, according to CCC Executive Vice President Everett Rank.

The new rate, down from 14.125 percent, reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury in June, Rank said.

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## **USDA ANNOUNCES NEW FINANCIAL RULES FOR FEDERALLY LICENSED WAREHOUSES**

WASHINGTON, June 3—In a move to give farmers and others more protection when they store commodities in warehouses, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will require federally licensed grain and rice warehouses to meet new tests of financial stability starting July 1.

The regulations will be effective for all grain and rice warehouse operators licensed under provisions of the U.S. Warehouse Act. Some 2,000 warehouses are currently licensed under the act.

"We will take two actions to ensure greater financial soundness of warehouses to further protect those who store commodities in these warehouses," said James Springfield, a warehouse official in USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

"First, we will raise the minimum net asset requirement from \$10,000 to \$25,000," he said. The requirement is figured at 20 cents per bushel of the total licensed capacity of the warehouse, rather than the amount of bushels actually stored in the warehouse.

A deficiency in required total net assets above the \$25,000 may be supported by a like increase in the warehouse operator's bond. This action was proposed last June 9.

"Second," Springfield said, "we will require warehouse operators to furnish USDA with financial statements consisting of a balance sheet and statements of income including profit and loss, retained earnings and changes in financial position."



Springfield said the statements must be prepared under generally accepted accounting principles and must be reviewed or audited by an independent public accountant in line with standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

He said the public accountant need not be a certified public accountant, as a Dec. 7 proposal would have required, but the accountant cannot be associated with the warehouse firm. Warehouse operators are also subject to an additional onsite inspection by USDA examiners and an audit authorized by the secretary of agriculture.

"These more stringent financial requirements should lend added financial strength to grain warehouses that store farmers' commodities," Springfield said. "The requirements also carry out recommendations made by Secretary Block's grain elevator task force."

Springfield said the task force reviewed current grain warehouse laws and regulations to recommend possible changes to safeguard interests of both farmers and the government when a commercial grain elevator goes bankrupt. The task force also established a committee that will continue to study and recommend ways to strengthen the financial stability of warehouses.

Warehouse operators who contract to store grain, rice and seed that are either owned by the Commodity Credit Corporation or which serve as collateral for CCC price support loans must comply with the same requirements, effective July 1.

USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service's regulations for these warehouse operators also remove the ceiling on net worth requirements and permit the use of a standby irrevocable letter of credit as an additional acceptable substitute security for net worth deficiencies.

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## **NEW YORK APPROVED TO RECEIVE STALLIONS FROM CEM-AFFECTED COUNTRIES**

WASHINGTON, June 3—New York has become the ninth state approved by U.S. Department of Agriculture officials to receive stallions imported from countries affected with contagious equine metritis, a venereal disease of horses.

Other states approved to receive stallions from countries affected with the disease are California, Colorado, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina and Virginia.

Dr. David Herrick, a staff veterinarian with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said New York's animal health regulations provide for the required post-entry inspections, testing and precautionary treatments necessary to prevent the introduction of the disease.

Merrick said these requirements are in addition to USDA-required testing and inspection in the nation of origin and at the U.S. port of entry animal import center. Stallions will remain under quarantine at the premises of destination until all testing and treatments are completed.

Contagious equine metritis has been spread by international shipment of infected breeding horses since it was discovered in 1977. The only cases diagnosed in the United States have been in Kentucky and Missouri. Nations considered infected are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom.

Notice of this action is scheduled for publication in the June 7 Federal Register. Public comments may be sent by Aug. 6 to the deputy administrator for veterinary services, APHIS, USDA, Room 818, 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, Md., 20782.

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## **RESEARCH UPDATE; USDA GIVES STORY LEADS**

WASHINGTON June 3—Here are brief updates and contacts for some of the work researchers are doing at the U.S. Department of Agriculture:

**PLASTIC THROW-AWAYS**—Toss the laundry into the washing machine, plastic bag and all. Don't worry about the plastic mulch in the tomato rows. The laundry bag disappears in the rinse cycle, and the garden mulch dissolves after the growing season.

Corn starch in these plastics makes them biodegradable, an easy way to dispose of the waste. Basic researchers are pursuing starch's use in



biodegrading waste. They are testing the amounts of starch that give these plastics various degrees of brittleness, permeability and decay from micro-organisms.

Plastic wraps for food storage are another possibility, since starch-based plastics have low oxygen permeability.

Contact: Dr. Felix H. Otey, research chemist, Northern Regional Research Center, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Peoria, ILL. 61604. Telephone (309) 685-4011.

**LIMIT CHOLESTEROL**—Researchers are trying to cut down on the amount of cholesterol in food at the source, the animal, and they've made progress. When they added fiber to the diets of egg-laying hens, for example, the cholesterol level in the eggs dropped as much as 13 percent.

The hens were fed fiber from corn, soybeans, alfalfa, sunflowers, rice and wood shavings.

Egg yolk cholesterol decreased the most—13.3 percent—in hens fed 8.8 percent sunflower meal in their diets. Adding about 10 percent wood shavings caused about a 10 percent cholesterol reduction.

Why? Scientists think the fiber causes a scraping action in the hen's intestines—possibly scraping off cells of the villi, the site of cholesterol synthesis, which reduces the bird's overall cholesterol output.

Contact: James L. McNaughton, animal nutritionist, Poultry Department Research Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Mississippi State, Miss. 39762. Telephone (601) 323-1964.

**MAKING WASPS HUSTLE**—There may be enough *Heliothis* bollworms in a cotton or corn field to damage the crop but not enough to make their natural enemy, the *Trichogramma* wasp, take notice.

Problem: How to get the wasps to attack.

Experiment: Scientists know that the wasps are attracted by a substance called kairomone, derived from the moth wing scales of the bollworm. So, researchers coated black-eyed peas with an artificial kairomone to trick wasps into responding as though higher numbers of hosts were available in the field.

Results: The wasps hustled in search of host eggs to sting. Now, kairomone is being tested in a complex program designed to ecologically reduce bollworm populations.

Contact: Dr. Joe Jewis, entomologist, Southern Grain Insect Research, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Tifton, Ga. 31793. Telephone (912) 382-6904.

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